

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1060

INFO US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 450

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 4984

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, LI

SUBJ: LIBERIAN REPRESENTATION AT COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED MEETING

REF: STATE 171412

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT TOLBERT INTENDS TO ATTEND COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT. FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS PROBABLY WILL ATTEND AS WELL. TOLBERT CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXERCISE MODERATING INFLUENCE ON ACTIONS AND FORMULATIONS, PARTICULARLY VIS-A-VIS U.S. DENNIS IS MORE PROBLEMATIC; HE CANNOT BE RELIED UPON TO CONVEY U.S. VIEWS OR TO OPPOSE ACTIVITIES INIMICAL TO U.S. END SUMMARY.

2. IN JULY 5 CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR TOLBERT SAID THAT HE INTENDS TO ATTEND COLOMBO MEETING. HIS PURPOSE IS TO PREVENT FORMATION OF GROUPS OR BLOCS AND TO AVOID BLOC ACTION BASED ON BLOC SENTIMENTS, WITHOUT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF PROS AND CONS OF ISSUES INVOLVED. HE NOTED THAT HIS "PRESENCE IS NECESSARY", AND ADDED THAT BOUMEDIENNE HAD "INSISTED" THAT TOLBERT ATTEND.

3. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THAT
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FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS WILL ALSO GO TO COLOMBO, WE HAVE

NO DOUBT THAT HE WILL DO SO. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT HE WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED AT LEAST BY ASSISTANT MINISTERS D. ELWOOD DUNN AND CHARLES ANSUMANA COOPER AS ADVISERS AND BOIMA FAHNBULLEH AS SECRETARY OF DELEGATION.

4. PRESIDENT TOLBERT IS WELL DISPOSED TOWARD U.S. AS HE WILL BE MAKING STATE VISIT TO U.S. IN SEPTEMBER, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT HE WILL BE VERY CAREFUL AT AUGUST MEETING IN COLOMBO ABOUT TREATMENT OF QUESTIONS THAT MIGHT OFFEND U.S. SENSITIVITIES.

5. ALTHOUGH FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS PROFESSES A KINDLY DISPOSITION TOWARD U.S., HE FROM TIME TO TIME EVIDENCES CERTAIN ANTI-U.S. FEELINGS. IN INTERNATIONAL FORA HE FREQUENTLY BACKS (OR EVEN PROPOSES) LANGUAGE WHICH HE KNOWS WILL NOT SIT WELL WITH U.S. BUT WHICH HE BELIEVES HE CAN PERSUADE US TO ACCEPT AS BETTER LANGUAGE THAN WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN ADOPTED. AT OAU SUMMIT HE INTRODUCED RESOLUTION CONDEMNING ISRAELI AGGRESSION ON UGANDA, COMPLETELY OVERLOOKING WHAT HE KNEW TO BE A PRIMARY U.S. CONCERN, INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM ASPECTS OF EPISODE AT ENTEBBE. IN EXPLAINING THIS ACTION DENNIS SAID HE HAD RESISTED DEMANDS FOR HARSHER LANGUAGE ON CHAPTER 7 SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE LOOKED TO HIM IN PAST TO PRESENT U.S. VIEWS IN AFRICAN AND NON-ALIGNED COUNCILS, HE HAS NOT BEEN WILLING TO TAKE MUCH HEAT, EVEN IN DEFENSE OF PRINCIPLES. AT MAURITIUS, WHEN U.S. VETO OF ANGOLAN MEMBERSHIP IN UN WAS DISCUSSED, DENNIS MADE NO EFFORT TO DELETE REFERENCE TO "ANACHRONISTIC IMPERIALISM." HE CONCEDES HE DID NOT AGREE WITH THAT PHRASEOLOGY INVIDIOUS TO U.S., BUT EXPLAINS HE DID NOT OPPOSE IT BECAUSE HE WANTED TO AVOID BEING CALLED "A STOOGE" OF THE AMERICANS.

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